

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY:PM/DCA:MARIETTI

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO INDIAN OCEAN COLLECTIVE

BAGHDAD BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO BY POUCH

XMT USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 053442

FOL PORT LOUIS 0234 SENT ACTION SECSTATE FEB 28, 1978
REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0234

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO INDIAN OCEAN COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, XO, MP

SUBJECT: ROUND IV U.S.- SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN TALKS: MAURITIAN REACTION

REF: STATE 046020

7. DCM BRIEFED RANKING FONMIN OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR INDIAN
OCEAN AFFAIRS, DRAWING UPON PARAS 2 AND 3 OF REFTTEL. OFFICIAL,
WHO HAD REQUESTED BRIEFING SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER, TOOK
SPECIAL NOTE OF PARA 3 AND COMMENTED IN SUMMARY THAT WHILE
TALKS SEEMED TO BE MAKING PROGRESS AT TECHNICAL LEVEL (I.E.,
DRAFTING GROUP ACTUALLY WORKING ON TEXT OF AGREEMENT),
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SOVIET ACTION IN ETHIOPIA AND U.S. REACTION TO IT MIGHT
WELL JEOPARDIZE POSSIBILITY OF AN AGREEMENT.

2. FONMIN OFFICIAL THEN PROCEEDED TO EXPRESS HIS CONCERN
OVER SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE HORN AND LAMENTED THAT
AFRICAN STATES APPEARED IN RATHER HELPLESS POSITION TO
DO ANYTHING TO STOP THE HOSTILITIES.

3. COMMENTING ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A GOM-SPONSORED CONFERENCE ON THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, HE SAID THAT THE PERSON WHO SPEARHEADED THE IDEA WAS DEPUTY JAMES BURTH DAVID, PRESIDENT OF THE LABOR PARTY, IN ORDER TO STEAL THUNDER FROM A MAURITIAN MILITARY MOVEMENT (MMM)- PROMOTED CONFERENCE ON SAME SUBJECT. FONMIN OFFICIAL SAID THAT IN SPITE OF HIS ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN CLARIFICATION AS TO WHETHER GOM CONFERENCE WAS TO BE A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED CONFERENCE OR ONE SPONSORED BY THE LABOR PARTY ALONE, THE QUESTION REMAINED UNANSWERED. HE BELIEVED THAT RESPONSE TO BURTH DAVID'S INVITATION FOR OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO SEND PARTICIPANTS HAD BEEN UNENTHUSIASTIC. ALSO GOALS OF CONFERENCE WERE AS YET UNCLEAR AND APPARENTLY NOT MUCH THOUGHT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO AN AGENDA. SEEING THIS AND WANTING TO MAINTAIN SOME CONSTRAINTS ON THE COURSE OF THE CONFERENCE, THE FONMIN HAD SUGGESTED THAT CONFERENCE RESTRICT ITSELF WITHIN TERMS OF THE UN RESOLUTION CALLING FOR MAKING THE INDIAN OCEAN A ZONE OF PEACE. FONMIN HAD EVEN SUCCEEDED IN GETTING THE PRIME MINISTER TO ADOPT THIS LINE IN A JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FOLLOWING HIS RECENT OFFICIAL VISIT TO BANGLADESH. BUT ISSUES TO BE DEBATED AT CONFERENCE WERE STILL UNDECIDED. HE CONCLUDED THAT CONFERENCE WOULD PROBABLY NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL FINAL PART OF 1978, IF THEN, AND THAT UNTIL IT WAS CLEARER WHO WAS SPONSORING, WHO WOULD BE COMING, AND THE PRECISE AGENDA, NO INVITATIONS

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WOULD BE ISSUED TO THE "BIG POWERS"-- THE U.S. SOVIET UNION, FRANCE, AND U.K. KEELEY UNQUOTE VANCE

NOTE BY OC/T: POUCHED BAGHDAD, MOGADISCIO.

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